which should be in the nature of a 'House of Commons'. The present property qualification for electorship to the Assembly with the payment of a tax of Rs. 50 per annum should be kept up and not reduced.) The Member then dwelt on the necessity for an Executive Council consisting of officials and non-officials. The decision of the majority should be made binding on the Dewan. The ever-growing number of Departments made it impossible for a single man to satisfactorily look after all of them and the creation of an Executive Council would go a long way to relieve the Dewan of a good deal of his burden and responsibility.

Mr. Narayanan Madhavan Kartavu (Member, Shertallai Taluk) submitted that foreigners in British employ who were brought in as Dewans of the State naturally felt it a delicate task to assert themselves in cases in which the interests of Travancore came into collision with those of the British Government such as Telegraph, Post, etc. This state of affairs would terminate, if an Executive Council was established. The Member also incidentally referred to the necessity for a different treatment being accorded to the joint families paying a large amount of tax to Government and the individual members of divided families paying the minimum tax which would entitle them to return candidates to the Legislative Council and the Popular Assembly and stated that the case of the men under the former category deserved sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Government.

162. Need for giving a greater share to the representatives of the people in the work of administration.

Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai B. A., B. L. (Member, Trivandrum Taluk) represented that democratic ideas were now prevailing all over the world and that the people everywhere were for securing a larger share in the government of their country. The people of Travancore had earned from their Dewans testimonials for sobriety, moderation and political sagacity, but they were not yet given the share in the administration of the country which they deserved. The Dewan was the real administrator of the State and he was not responsible to the representatives of the people. The Member stated that it would be desirable to have a cabinet of ministers responsible to the people.

As regards the revised draft rules regarding the constitution and working of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the member offered the following criticisms:—

(1) The number of subjects to be taken out of the purview of the Popular Assembly had been increased.

(2) The subjects to be discussed at the Assembly had to be selected, under the revised rules, at a meeting presided over by the Peishkar, and such an official control was undesirable.

(3) The same electorate had been introduced for the Legislative Council and the Popular Assembly.

(4) Joint families were not given special consideration in the matter of votes.

(5) Certain disciplinary powers had been given to the President, which were not necessary.

The Member prayed that the defects pointed out above might be removed before the rules were passed finally. He suggested that the Heads of the several Departments might also be made members of the Assembly and that they should be asked to answer criticisms levelled against them by the non-offfcial members.

Finally, the Member deplored the growth of class animosity in the House and prayed that the same be removed in the interests of the State as a whole.

Mr. V. Ramakrishna Panikkar (Member, Kartikapalli Taluk) began by saying that the heart-felt endeavours of His Highness the Maha Raja to train His Highness' subjects in the arts of civics and politics and to enable them to exert a continually growing influence over the administration of the State had had their desired effect, and that the people of Travancore, in view of the training they had in the Legislative Council, the Popular Assembly, the Municipal Councils and

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

the Panchayat Courts, and of their superiority in literacy, intelligence, patriotism and loyalty, deserved to be given greater powers, rights and privileges. He then suggested the formation of an Executive Council with the Dewan as President and a few members with portfolios in charge of particular departments, the members being elected by the Legislative Council and asked to vacate office when a majority in the legislature desired it. The members elected to the Executive Council should be non-officials and should not be granted any honorarium.

The Member then remarked that the present Dewan had earned the reputation of a strong administrator owing to his keen intellect, high culture and resoluteness of purpose, and that, if persons like him could not get the advice of the choicest men of the country as members of the Executive Council, the administration of the State would not conduce to the best interests of the people.

Passing to the Legislative Council, the Member thanked the Government for Regulation II of 1097 which conferred greater and more extensive powers on the people than Regulation I of 1095. But he said that the new Regulation too afforded room for further improvement. The members should be given unrestricted powers in the matter of budget discussion; the Dewan should not have the power to veto any measure passed by the Council; persons receiving any kind of remuneration from Government should not be eligible for membership; and non-officials should also be posted as polling officers. He hoped that the matter would receive consideration in due course.

As regards the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Member prayed that the existence of the institution should be re-affirmed by legislative sanction and that the revised draft rules should be thoroughly modified. The election of a member should not be cancelled at the option of the Government on the ground that it was necessary in the interests of the public.

The Member also prayed that wider powers be given to the Municipal Councils, that the number and jurisdiction of the Panchayat Courts be increased, that efficiency should not be sacrificed to communal representation in the matter of filling up places in the Panchayat Courts, that Taluk and District Boards be formed as early as possible and that Committees appointed to enquire into matters of administration be constituted with a preponderating non-official majority.

Mr. M. L. Janardanan Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Alleppey) began by saying that the only two institutions the people had in Travancore for participating in the work of administration were the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and that the country as a whole felt thankful to the Government of His Highness the Maha Raja for the substantial measure of reform conferred by Regulation II of 1097. It had, however, to be said that Regulation II of 1097 did not satisfy all the aspirations of the people, in view of the fact that in framing the same the authorities had conveniently ignored the high educational standard attained by the country as compared with British India and that freedom had not been given to the members to discuss such important subjects as European vagrants, extradition of criminals and seaports. With all that, the Member said that the subjects of His Highness felt grateful to His Highness the Maha Raja for his large-hearted kindness and were quite prepared to willingly cooperate with the Government in making the reformed Legislative Council a success.

As regards the Popular Assembly, the Member said that it was a useful institution and that it would continue to be so, provided the Government would endeavour to keep it as a useful institution. An Assembly constituted under the revised draft rules would, instead of being an improvement on the existing institution, lose even that little power for good which it now possessed. Rules 35 to 39 ignored the intelligence and the awakened political consciousness of the country.

He then proceeded to put forward the need for asking for a greater share in the administaration of the State and said that, although under the reformed Legislative Council the people had the power to vote grants, there was no effective check

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

as to the fair distribution and proper appropriation of the different items allotted. As long as there was no executive responsible and subordinate to the legislature, the system was very defective and the control of the people was consequently ineffective. At present, public money was being wasted and the Member quoted figures from the Administration Report of 1096 to support his statement in regard to the Departments of Industries and Civil Supplies, as also the Medical and the Public Works Departments. A careful handling of expenditure, on the other hand, could have solved the important shipping problem of the State to a very large extent. The inadequacy of fiscal protection and the unsatisfactory nature of shipping facilities in the existing seaports had together contributed to materially reduce a large item of receipts in the revenue of the State. He further deplored the fact that the all-important subject of sea ports had been left outside the purview of the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly as per revised draft rules. The policy of Government in the management of the railway, again, was, the according to the Member, a blunder. The Darbar possessed its own engines and rolling stock, and yet they were not to be found on the line. The State was, in fact,losing a large portion of its revenue owing to the absence of a special officer experienced in railway matters.

The students' strike and its aftermath also furnished another reason for the people to ask for a larger share in the administration. That incident contributed to throw a cloud on the past year which, in many respects, showed a record of progress. The action of the students throughout and the failure of their elders to nip the evil in the bud deserved the severest condemnation, but at the same time it had to be remembered that it was not the first time that the subordinate ranks of the police took advantage of such occasions to commit excesses. In the circumstances, the Member thought that it was highly essential that a Committee of enquiry should be formed without delay.

The Member then summarised his suggestions as follows:—

(1) The prohibition of the discussion of certain subjects by the Legislative Council such as European vagrants, extradition of criminals and sea-ports should be removed.

(2) The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be constituted on a more liberal basis.

(3) An Executive Council should be created consisting of two non-official members to be elected by the legislature and to be in charge of certain portfolios of the administration with the express proviso that the prerogative of His Highness the Maha Raja should stand above every resolution passed by the legislature.

Lastly, the Member thanked the Government for initiating a policy of industrial advancement and for effecting the separation of Devaswoms from the Land Revenue Department.

Dewan's reply.—You have touched on the draft rules relating to the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. I may say that, in regard to this matter, Government keep a perfectly open mind. The draft rules will be reconsidered very carefully in the light of the suggestions that have now been made and that will hereafter be made and revised.

In regard to some of the rules under the new Legislative Council Regulation to which objection has been taken, those objections will also be considered. It is not my claim that the Rules are perfect. I must also say that no revision of the rules can take place before the next election.

In regard to the representations about the necessity for an Executive Council, responsible government and other measures for the greater protection of public interests, I have only to say this. As already admitted by some of the Members, Regulation II of 1097 confers large and substantial administrative powers on the Legislative Council which will have a large non-official majority. Government must watch the working of this Council before any further decision is taken.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly